

Susan Nichols

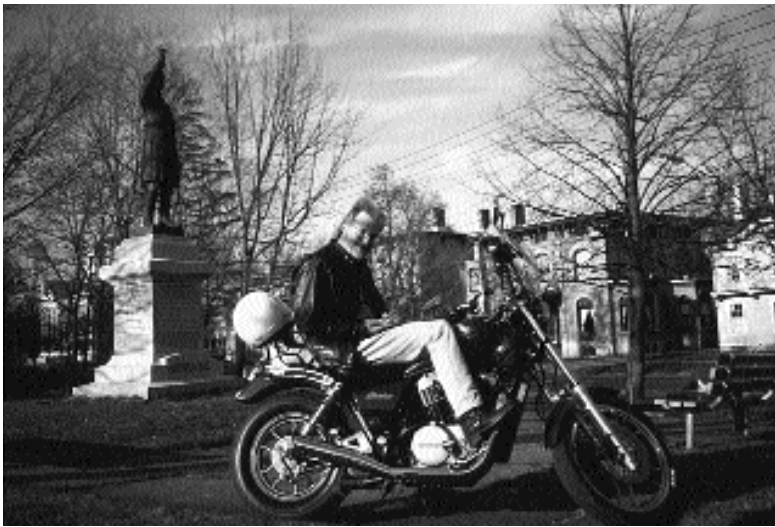
SOS! Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?

On rollerblades, volunteer Florissa Colina covers more ground when surveying sculpture with Tampa SOS! Photo courtesy of Marianne Egglar-Gerozissis.

Save Outdoor Sculpture!, known best as SOS!, was established in 1989 under the joint sponsorship of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, and the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property. The project's two goals are to inventory all publicly accessible outdoor sculpture in the United States and to raise public awareness about the need to provide professional treatment and routine maintenance of artworks in their communities. During the first five years of its existence, SOS! has accomplished much.

nity residents, Urban Corps members, ages 18 through 25, completed surveys for San Diego SOS! The Seattle Art Commission, as part of its SOS! obligation, conducted workshops with residents whose neighborhood sculptures were victims of gang and drug-related vandalism. Students and young adults are an important part of long-term plans for care of outdoor sculpture. Student participation in a fundraising campaign to restore professionally a statue in a town's downtown library park and to police the area for litter could be the best civics lesson possible. In the blink of an eye, as policy makers and voters, they will be responsible for our cultural resources.

To date, SOS! has yielded impressive results. Of the 106 SOS! project sites, 23 have completed their work; surveys for the balance should be wrapped up by late 1996. Only Louisiana remains without an SOS! survey effort, although New Orleans has been completed. All data are added to the Inventory of American Sculpture (IAS), which already contains more than 50,000 records of both indoor and outdoor sculptures. An additional



New York SOS! volunteer David Grotke, featured in American Motorcyclist (August 1994), surveyed 20 works on his Honda Shadow 85. Photo courtesy of Billie Ingersoll.

More than 200 organizations and thousands of volunteers have joined in SOS! in 106 projects nationwide. History and art groups, universities and civic clubs from the private and public sectors have signed on to coordinate SOS! locally. Volunteers were recruited from within their organizations' ranks as well as the general public. They have included a tie store manager, potato chip sales representatives, and retired people, including one couple in their 70s and 80s. Girl Scouts in Alaska and Georgia are fulfilling requirements for their Gold Star Badges by participating in SOS! As affiliate volunteers, a class of sixth graders in Georgia wrote articles for their weekly county newspaper about 20 works they located, researched, and photographed themselves. Working alongside commu-



Luciani Nelson, Senior Girl Scout, Troop 210, achieved her Gold Award by surveying 10 works for Georgia SOS!. Photo courtesy of Betty Jones.

15,000 report forms of outdoor sculpture have been received from SOS! volunteers and, once thoroughly cross-checked, will be added to the database.

The Inventory has been used by the obvious audiences of scholars, conservators, curators and picture researchers, as well as by the less obvious—artists' descendants, filmmakers and authors writ-



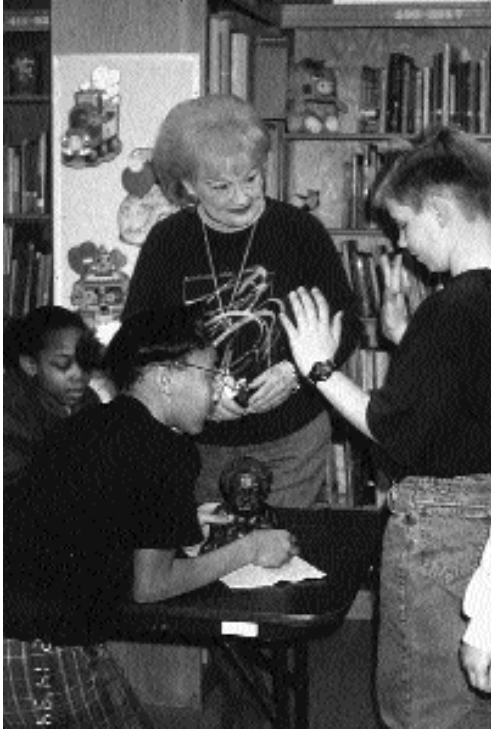
ing on trolley cars and philosophy, and developing teaching materials in conjunction with the 1996 Summer Olympics. Conservators have searched the database for information about examples of patina used by Thomas Crawford and maintenance of fiberglass works by Luis Jimenez, lists of concrete works by Arnaldo Pomodoro, and all zinc sculptures. Early in 1995, the Inventory will be accessible through the

Internet; now inquirers may visit, write, or telephone to 202-786-2384.

The database is most useful when kept current. In the long-term, people who make, commission, or treat outdoor sculpture will be expected to provide the Inventory staff with updates and will be reminded of that obligation through their professional journals. The Maine Arts Commission will require artists to submit an SOS! survey form when installing new works. Others who are likely candidates to be helpful with local efforts to underwrite professional care—service clubs, veterans

posts and special interest groups, for example—will be reached through their national organizations and popular and club publications.

Nearly three-quarters of a million dollars of cash and in-kind support have been contributed for support of local projects and treatment of sculptures during SOS! In Austin, Texas, Holleman Photographic Labs contributed processing for *all* project film. Cleveland photographers Frances and Robert Waltz donated time and services to create an exhibition about deteriorated works in the city which was featured in a full-color newspaper insert. In addition to donations of goods from hardware stores, grocery stores and banks, foundations and art councils have awarded grants for supplies, brochures, walking tours, classroom curricula, symposia, and roundtables. At the national level, TimeWamer, Inc. provided 4,000 copies of videotapes and York Photo Labs Inc., contributed 500 film processing envelopes.



Dora Timmerman, co-coordinator, Wichita SOS!, piloted a sculpture appreciation program consisting of walking tours, slide shows and visits from a sculptor for 80 fifth grade students. The unit culminated with students unveiling their own works on the school grounds. Photo courtesy Wichita SOS!.

The Texas Historical Commission, which sponsored Texas SOS!, snared a \$250,000 grant from the state's Department of Transportation to conserve and maintain 10 sculptures. "Thanks to ISTE, the mega-highway bill, our frustration and occasional heartache due to inadequate funds for professional conservation and maintenance is set aside for now," notes Hillary Summers, Project Coordinator for Texas SOS!

"Our highly successful and well-publicized SOS! survey in Texas paved the way to implement Texas SOS!, Phase II, which will specifically address conservation and maintenance issues identified in Phase I," Summers justifiably boasts. "Although our SOS! Incentive Award could not be used for treatment or maintenance, it helped with related costs, freeing up money to be applied to our match. The endorsement of a nationally-recognized program like SOS! lent credibility and enhanced our applications. For instance, from the Texas Commission on the Arts, we received another \$2,100 toward our match requirement."

Texas SOS!, Phase II, plans a fully-integrated program that includes much more than merely conservation work. As part of the State Preservation Office, Texas SOS! has long-range plans to establish a responsible and integrated conservation program that will be a model for others, to spur local media attention, to initiate or strengthen existing adopt-a-monument programs, and to continue to educate and raise public awareness in communities throughout the state. The Texas Historical Commission staff also plans to produce an instructional videotape and technical handbook.

An article about Vermont SOS! in the *Rutland Herald* caught the attention of State Senator Vince Illuzi, a man with roots in the granite carving business. "Thanks to Illuzi's efforts," notes Ann Lawless, Project Coordinator, Vermont SOS!, "the 1993 legislature allocated \$5,000 to fund restoration of the state's outdoor sculpture and their bases, many of which are granite." The state's contribution was supplemented by awards from SOS! and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. In addition, Vermont SOS! received the Governor's Award for Community Service in 1993.

Due to SOS!, damaged and neglected sculpture have received increased visibility, resulting in start-up adopt-a-sculpture efforts in Cleveland and Milwaukee and heightened interest in existing programs in New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, and Dallas. Further, Arizona is investigating a statewide program; Massachusetts SOS! has received state lottery contributions of between \$250 and \$500 from 23 towns; the Atlanta Track Club

pledged \$10,000 toward restoration of the *Peace Monument*, located at the finish point for its annual 10K race; Denver Parks and Recreation received \$29,000 from limited gaming to treat *Children's Fountain*; and the City of Toledo allocated \$170,000 for the treatment of 17 artworks.

Also in Ohio, \$80,000 in state arts funding was awarded to SOS! projects. In addition, the Ohio Arts Council amended its guidelines to permit requests for conservation and education efforts. Awards have included funding for curriculum development incorporating outdoor sculpture, historical monuments, conservation issues, and other SOS! issues and interests in the classroom. One outcome of this support has been production of the highly acclaimed, bouncy video geared to elementary students, "I Am A Sculptor," from Toledo SOS! with a complementary teacher resource guide including lesson plans for use statewide.

Florida SOS! volunteers took the plunge to survey Christ of the Deep by Guido Galletti. The 9' bronze is located 3.5 miles offshore at Key Largo, amidst a coral reef, a popular site for divers and snorklers. Photo courtesy of Richard Lemack.



The SOS! Fund-Raising Kit collects creative fund-raising tips in four formats, two VHS-videotapes (30 min. and 10 min.), booklet (40 pp.) and planning guide (14 panels). Fee \$7.00. Photo by Gene Young.

dents a look at what outdoor sculpture is and how it commemorates history. The kit is distributed by Crystal Productions, 800-255-8629.

Expanded and additional examples of local and statewide efforts to raise funds to underwrite professional care of outdoor sculpture are central to any long-term impact of SOS! To support those initiatives, the SOS! Fund-Raising Kit was developed to assist enterprising individuals and businesses, grass roots organizations, service clubs with local and national agenda, and municipal and statewide agencies in their efforts to underwrite costs of professional treatment of outdoor sculpture. The fund-raising kit is part of the training materials developed for a national workshop series, "The Preservation of Outdoor Sculpture and Monuments," jointly sponsored by SOS! and the National Park Service, Mid-Atlantic Region, to be held from March through November 1995. In addition to fund raising, the workshops focus on planning and contracting for care of outdoor works.

For additional information about SOS!, call 800-422-4612.

Susan Nichols is Director of the Save Outdoor Sculpture! program at the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property, Washington, DC. She served as a guest editor of this issue of CRM.



Educators, students, conservators, and sculptors were involved in development of *Public Sculpture: America's Legacy*, a multimedia educational packet with video and study guide for middle and high school students. Developed as part of its National Arts and Humanities Education Program by the SOS! co-sponsor, National Museum of American Art, the packet offers teachers and stu-